

# Knowledge of the Waters

By Abraxas - Translated by E. E. Rehmus and published by Inner Traditions

The life of all beings, without exception, is ruled by a primordial force deep inside them. The nature of this force is *craving*: an appetite that is never satisfied, an endless restlessness, an irresistible need, and a blind, wild yearning.

The essence of this primordial cosmic nature is: becoming; chaotic and disorderly transformation; an incoercible flux; generation-destruction; attraction-repulsion, terror-desire; formation-dissolution. All of these elements are combined in a fiery mixture that knows no rest.

The Wise spoke of it as a wonder and as a terror. They called it: Universal and Living Fire, ύλη (matter), Green Dragon, Quintessence, First Substance, Great Magical Agent. The principle of their “GREAT WORK”, since the Magistry of Creation and the Magistry with which man realizes himself according to the Royal Arts are one and the same.

This Matter of ours is neither an abstraction of profane philosophy nor a myth or a fairy tale, but a living and powerful reality, the spirit and the vitality of the Earth and of Life.

The human race does not *know* it. A providential natural law keeps it hidden from their consciousness through the illusory spectacle of material phenomena, of solid reality, without which there would be no rest or peace in their lives. According to the same providential law, this veil of ignorance is removed and the eye of Knowledge is opened only at a certain point of growth and in the presence of a strength able to endure the vision.

Know, therefore, that the Life of your life is in It.

Look out for It.

It reveals itself, for example, at all times of sudden danger.

It may be a speeding car rushing towards you, when you walk absentmindedly; or the opening of a yawning crevice in the earth under your feet; a flameless burning coal, or an electrified object that you have touched inadvertently. Then in reaction, something violent and extremely fast happens. Is it your “will”, your “consciousness”, your “Self”? No. Your will, consciousness, and Self usually come into play only later on. At the time they were absent and left behind. Something deeper, faster, more absolute than everything that you are has suddenly manifested, taken charge, and asserted itself.

When you experience hunger, terror, sensual thirst, panic, and spasm - there you will encounter this thing again, as something violent, dark, and untamed. And if such intimations allow you to feel it, you will gradually be able to experience it as the invisible background of your whole waking life.

The deep roots of inclinations, faiths, atavisms, invincible and irrational convictions; habits, character, everything that lives in you as animal instinct or as biological legacy; all the body's will; the blind thirst for life, yearning to generate, to preserve, and to continue itself - all this reconnects and merges into the same principle. In relation to it, you usually have the same freedom as a chained dog: you may not feel the chain and think you are free until you try to go beyond a certain point. But when you do that, the chain tautens and stops you. Otherwise, it deceives you: you move in circles without realizing it.

Do not deceive yourself: even the "highest things" obey this "god". Watch out: the more they appear independent and freed, the more intimately and strictly they obey it, obedient to its intoxicating magic. As long as its deepest yearning is affirmed, this force does not care for this form or that, or for various "reasons" with which you believe you can justify yourself. Being disguised, it reasserts its bond over you. Look out for this force too, and come to know it through the wild power of imagination and suggestion. Again, it is a speed that freezes and chains you; when it asserts itself, you can do nothing. The more you "want" to oppose it, the more you will feed it at your expense.

It is like fear: the more you try to drive it out, the stronger it grows. It is like the sleep that evades you the harder you "try" to fall asleep. It is like a plank over the abyss: it is the suggestion of falling, and you will certainly fall if you force yourself to cross, "willing" to overcome it.

It is like the flame of passion that rises sharper, the more you "conscience" tries to stifle it; it disappears only by entering inside and utterly poisoning you.

Here, again, it is this force that erupts. Be aware that this Being that merges with the emotional and irrational powers travels deeper within you, until it identifies itself with the same force in charge of the deeper functions of the physical life. What can "will", "thought", "Self" do against these functions? They are external to it: like parasites, they live off it, drawing essential fluids from it, though they are unable to descend all the way to its deep trunk.

Dig, without fear, with a sharp tool. Ask yourself: "What elements of my body can I justify with my will? Do I will my own breathing, or the inner combustion through which food is digested? Do I want my own form, my own flesh, this particular man, who lives in this fashion, happy or unhappy, noble or vulgar? But since we ask these questions, should I not press further on? Do I really will "my" will, "my" consciousness, "my" Self, or *are* they just there? That which I claim is caused by my will, I should also be able not to will it, and thus I should be able to live without it. As far as "my" empirical Self is concerned, do I own it or *does it own me*?


Reader, since you have approached the "Science of the Magi," you must be strong enough for this truth: *you are not the life in you*. You do not exist. There is nothing that you can call "mine". You do not own life: it is Life that owns you. You endure it. It is pure illusion that the phantasm of a "Self" is able to live forever, following the decay of the body. Can't you see that the relation with this body is

essential for your “Self,” and that any illness, trauma, or accident has a precise influence on all of its faculties, no matter how “spiritual” or “superior” they may be?

And now, detach yourself from your own self and cross the threshold, as you feel the rhythmic sensation of analogy, deeper and deeper into the dark recesses of the force that sustains your body.

Here it loses name and individuation. The sensation of this force will expand to encompass the notions of “me” and “not-me”, pervading all of nature, substantiating time, carrying myriads of beings along as if they were drunk or hypnotized, reaffirming itself in a thousand forms, irresistible, wild, limitless, burning with an eternal insufficiency and privation.

Think to yourself: “This is.” If this knowledge leads you back to yourself, and, as you experience a sense of deadly cold, you feel the abyss yawning beneath you: “I exist in this” - then you have achieved the KNOWLEDGE OF THE “WATERS.”<sup>1</sup>

In our Tradition, these “waters” or *Humidum Radicale* (“radical humidity”), have been symbolized as ∇ (downwards direction, precipitation). They have also been referred to as the “earthly Venus”, as female and cosmic matrix (∇ in Hinduism is the symbol of Shakti and of the yoni), or as “Original Snake” (because of the serpentine path , which is the astrological equivalent to ∇). It is the elementary demiurgic power, God’s “Magic”, the primordial substance that was precipitated when God said “Let there be Light!”

Later on you will learn to recognize it as Light: an elementary light that carries the “Signatures” of all things like whirlwind-natures. It is undifferentiated, being idea, substance, and motion, both physical and psychic; it is indifferent toward good and evil and to every form, in its plastic capacity to be transformed into all things. It is a blind yearning; in it, idea and reality is instantaneously and “magically” one and the same, just as in that reflection of it, that “path” leading to it, which is the power of imagination in man.

Since everything is at the mercy of this force and exists through this force, know that he who learns to master it completely will be able to dominate through all of nature: fire, earth, air, and water, life and death, the powers of heaven and hell, because this force encompasses them all.

And now, since you wished to learn about it, realize that the “Science of the Magi” *wills this* and disdains anything that is not *this*.

To create something stable, impassive, immortal, something rescued from the “Waters” that is now living and breathing outside of them, finally free; and then, like

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<sup>1</sup> In Buddhism, this “knowledge of the Waters” corresponds to the realization of so-called “samsaric consciousness” and of the truth of anattā (no-soul). Beyond the awareness of the unique life of a given individual, there is the awareness of the trunk, of which this life is only a branch: the primordial force of this trunk is experienced. Moreover, what is also experienced is the unreality of the “Self” and of everything that resembles the “Self” (this is the doctrine of anattā). To feel *samsāra* and to feel oneself in *samsāra* is the presupposition, also in Buddhism, for the realization of the which is truly spiritual and transcendent. (Note by UR)

a strong man who grasps a raging bull by the horns, slowly but relentlessly subjugating it, to dominate this cosmic nature in oneself - this is the secret of our Art, the Art of the Sun and of Power, of the “Mighty Strength of all Strengths.” The high sciences of the Kabbalah and Magic promise an immortal nature and a regal power in man: thus they must be regarded as vain and deceitful if they do not deliver. (E. Levi)

Stop your petty mind: if you think this is a folly or a proud dream originated from shallow pride, be assured that it is fear thinking in you. You do not need to believe: on the contrary, *you must not believe*. Try. Dare.

The “Matter of the Great Work” is here: inside your craving, in your deepest will, closer to you than you are to yourself. Arouse it, excite it. Resist it. Then, you will experience in yourself its wild power, in proportion to how far you can go beyond your daring. And if you can conceive a *even greater strength*, what can you still conceive that can resist it or would not be bent or broken by it?

You have now known the possibility of the Work, whether or not you are equal to do it.

Look.

This shore is one plagued with misery, darkness, and pollution. Before you is the mighty current. There lies the other shore.

On this side is ignorant people, lacking Knowledge, pale, passive, intoxicated, whose lives are still outside and on this side of the Waters. On the other shore you will find virile men, heroic souls, awakened to disgust, to revolt, to the Great Awakening; having left one shore behind, they dare face the current and the undertow, being led by their ever more firm, unshakable will. Once there, they are known as “Survivors of the Waters”, “Walkers on the Waters,” the “Holy Race of the Free,” “The Conquerors,” “The Lords of Life and Salvation,” “The Radiant Ones,” They are the “Dragon Slayers,” the “Dominators of the Bull,” “Consecrators of the Sun,” those who have been transformed through Ammon’s power and Wisdom.

These people can bind and freeze the Waters. Having been conquered by them, the Waters are now a magical force that obeys them, The Sun rises over the Waters and controls them with its reflection. Desire, the unleashed centerless lunar force (○ = Moon, the symbol of *Materia prima* or of *Humidum Radicale*, the radical Humidity) finds here a center (☉ = symbol of the Sun).

The positive ascendance (△, symbol of UR, initiatic Fire) that has asserted itself over the humid womb of the descendent ▽ balances it. This conjugation is known as the symbol of Conquerors - Solomon’s seal, which consist of two combined triangles ☆.

If you want to approach our Art, be aware that this is a painful struggle and somewhat like walking on a razor’s edge. You may win or lose, and two things lead to certain disaster: to be afraid and to interrupt the operation. Once you have begun,

you must go all the way, since an interruption leads to dreadful reaction, with the opposite result. You can easily understand why; at every step you take, an increasingly higher quantity of swirling energy is arrested and pushed upstreams; having been excited and provoked, it is filled with tension. As soon as you give up, it will come crashing down upon you and sweep you away.

Prepare yourself.

Fix your eyes on the goal and never lose sight of it.

Close your eyes. Create an image and look at it. In the dark, learn to discern a light that cannot be seen with physical eyes. This ethereal light carries the first secret of the Work.

Become insensitive to good and evil, upright, absolute, naked.

Learn to will without yearning, without fear or regrets.

Create a power to act without tiring. Let this power be cold, hard, and at the same time labile and flexible. The Secret of the Force consists in willing well, willing long, willing without ceasing - and in *never yearning*.

Cut yourself free from the bonds of sensuality, intoxication, and passion: reduce yourself to a simplicity that *wills*.

Violate every need. Use everything and abstain from everything as you please. Become the absolute ruler of your soul.

Create a resistance. What is mobile obeys what is immobile, and the powers of nature become subjected to him who can resist them. Having reached a point when you desire nothing and fear nothing, there will be few things over which you will not rule. However, enjoy nothing until you have first vanquished it within yourself.

The Force does not give itself up. Take it. Dare.

Being free, well balanced, strong, calm, and pure, and having slain desire, say: "I WANT."

This is the first teaching. The door has been opened to you. THE FORCE IS IN YOU.